Held for Ransom

By Augustus Goodrich Sherwin

(Copyright, 1915, by W. G. Chapman.)

"I shall never see your face again!" cried pretty but willful Nina Wilder stormily.

"All right," was the cool rejoinder of her fiance, Walter Bross—"you'll be sorry!"

"I? never!" declared the wrought-up young lady, her quivering tones betraying the necessity of emphasis against the dictates of her real soul. "I shall go away from you as far as I can—clear around the world, but I'll forget you!"

"Then I'll go, too!" Walter assured her.

"I shall take the opposite direction, if you do!" insisted Nina, and then she rushed from the room and up the stairs, and throwing herself on a couch in her own apartment burst into a violent fit of hysterics.

It was a foolish quarrel, for never were two beings more felicitously adapted to make life bright and happy together than they. Nina was an orphan living with a widowed aunt and possessed of a very liberal income from the estate of her dead father. Walter had just inherited a large fortune. He made no pretense of active business outside of being listed as president of a large construction company well patronized by political influence, all the real labor of its management falling to the lot of the subordinate officers.

The trouble was—jealousy. Neither had been in love before, both were young, fond of society, petted and spoiled. Because they were mere children of the heart they quarreled, went through the luxury of reproaches, then tears, then contrition, then a new plunge into a happy reconciliation.

This time, however, the "tiff" was serious. In a spirit of reckless mischief Walter had flirted outrageously with a young lady whom Nina detested. In retaliation the latter received the attention of an old discarded

Was Transformed Into a Very Natural Looking Gentleman of the Upper Italian Set.

flame. Then the crisis—the pretty engagement ring returned by mail, a cold bow from Walter when next Nina passed him on the street, and the following day Walter was bewildered, shocked, made madly desperate with the discovery that Nina and her aunt had left the city.

Whither bound he knew not, but by the end of a week he was pretty well assured that capricious Nina had indeed started on a trip abroad.

For another week Walter worried and sorrowed. Finally he came to the conclusion that there was no hope of a reconciliation and decided that it was his fate to die of a broken heart! It was quite the fad for the idle man with money to seek consolation in change. He started for Europe by way of New York. Meantime, although he did not know that, Nina had followed out her threat to travel around the world by way of San Francisco.

The war broke out while Walter was in Paris and he changed his plan of visiting Russia. The same intelligence was acquired by Nina while enjoying the novelties of Japan. She learned that Berlin and Vienna were now an impossibility to her. Her timid, nervous aunt insisted on a quick dash for Italy and a speedy further progress homeward.

Walter Bross, installed in the best hotel of Rome, was gloomily wondering if he had not better join one of the contending war forces and forget his troubles amid the roar of cannon and the boom of bursting shells. How Nina would regret that her stubbornness had sent him to a tragic death, reflected he! Then he arose from the luxurious chair in which he was resting. Two ladies had just arrived at the hostelry. He saw them clearly on their way to the parlor.

"Fate—destiny!" he gasped, for he had recognized Nina and her chaperon.

What to do? The dejected lover's heart beat mightily. It seemed as if a sentient spark had stirred up all the stored love of his soul. He had found her—they were under the same roof, but—

He knew Nina well. He realized that, given the benefit of any abrupt advance on his part, she would insist on torturing him with feigned or real indifference until she had "taught him a lesson." Result: a disguise. It was elaborate. For a handsome fee Walter was transformed into a very natural looking gentleman of the upper Italian set.

Then he set about bribing the hotel servants to learn the plans for the future of aunt and niece. He ascertained that they had arranged to sail for home within a week. In the meantime daily the two ladies made their pleasure and shopping rounds.

There was to be an international social event that took the form of a masked ball and Walter learned that the ladies were invited guests. Those attending were required to go in character costume, or at least to wear a mask. He secured an invitation. He made a notable cavalier and enveloped in a long cloak as soon as a cab had taken Nina and her chaperon away from the hotel, jumped into a second vehicle and joined their company at a distance.

Suddenly he made a discovery. The vehicle containing the ladies, after pursuing the main thoroughfares leading to the place of the masquerade, turned off into a side street. As it did so two suspicious occurrences fixed the attention of Walter. The driver of the former carriage swung a hand towards Nina's driver, while the latter kept straight on without turning.

"Stop!" ordered Walter instantly.

"Get sign—no," returned his driver, with a shrug of the shoulder, and drove on.

"You scoundrel—this is some plot!" cried Walter, and sprang from the vehicle and was down the side street in pursuit of the other carriage.

It was well that he did so. The days of brigandage were not over in the imperial city. Later Walter knew that the practically unprotected Nina and her aunt had been spotted by a league of criminals. Her diamonds, a knowledge of her wealth had led to a plan to kidnap her, remove her to a remote mountain fastness and hold her for ransom.

Walter was hot in the wake of the carriage as it drove into the court of an isolated mansion. The driver sprang down. He was about to apply a whistle to his lips to summon his confederates within the building, when Walter, close at hand, acted.

He had seized a heavy piece of a wagon tongue lying in the yard. One blow and the villainous driver went down like a piece of lead. Walter lifted his senseless form up to the seat, sat down beside him, took the lines and drove for the nearest police station.

The alarmed Nina fell to a chair stupefied as, reaching the station, Walter told his story. She glided to his side with contrite face and pleading eyes.

"You—you were seeking me!" she sobbed. "It must have been so."

"At least I found you," said Walter, with a glad smile.

"Oh, Walter, forgive me! forgive me! I have been cruel, wicked," she faltered. "Take me back, won't you—"

"Into my heart?" voiced Walter softly. "Why, you have been there always—and ever will be!"

HAS BEEN TAUGHT LESSON

Never Again Will One Particular Dog Approach Too Close to Any Flypaper.

Trix is just a white bulldog and has never taken a course in insectology. His owner had tied a piece of flypaper on the outside of the kitchen screen door to catch some of the flies that sought to get into the house. Trix walked leisurely up on the porch after spending a half hour looking through the cracks in the rear fence. He noticed a commotion on the screen and walked over to investigate. He looked closely at the flypaper. Then he turned his head. Yes, there was no mistaking the sound. Two or three flies, not yet ready to give up the ghost, were protesting with vigorous buzzes against their enforced detainment. One of the flies Trix thought particularly big for a housefly. But the working of his dog mind did not carry him beyond that point. He stepped up closer and wriggled his nose.

The big fly moved again in its sticky bed. The dog's nose went closer. The breeze blew a rag hanging on the back porch and it struck Trix on the hind leg. Unthinkingly he jerked forward just enough to have his nose come in contact with the flypaper. There was a howl and he tore down into the back yard with the big fly sitting on his nose. Into the dirt the dog thrust his nose and the bee was rubbed off. It was ten minutes before the dog had made up his mind to take things philosophically and quit whining about a bee sitting down on his nose. And now, if you show him a piece of flypaper, he will tear the back fence down trying to get away from it.—Indianapolis News.

As Others Saw Him.

J. Fuller Gloom—I stood on the corner the other afternoon and thought to myself how distressingly homely were most of the people who passed along the street. Just as I had plunged pretty deeply into philosophizing over the matter, two girls fluttered by, and I heard one of them say to the other: "Mercy! What homely people one sees on the street! Just look at that awful-looking old man standing on the corner, for instance!"—Kansas City Star.

Dead Sea Not So Dead.

The name "Dead Sea" nowhere occurs in the Bible, and was not used by writers before the time of Christ. The name was evidently given to the lake on account of the belief that no life existed in it. But some low forms of life are found in the water, and many small animals and birds live near the shores. The great tragedy of Sodom and Gomorrah may also have led to the bestowal of the name.—Christian Herald.

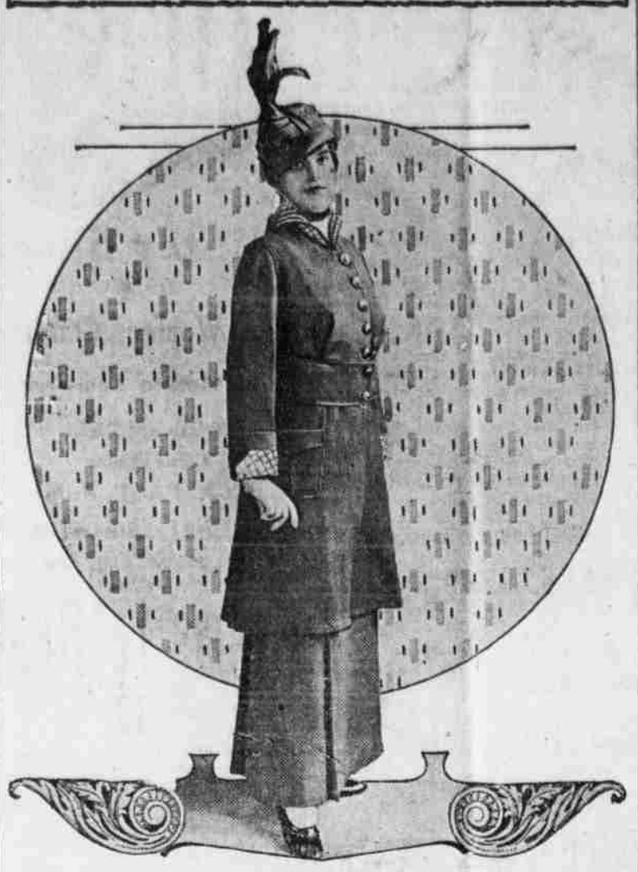
Case of Necessity.

"I understand he inherited a fortune?" "Yes, he was his rich uncle's only heir." "I thought so." "What do you mean?" "Nobody who had more than one heir to choose from would have picked him to leave all his money to."—Detroit Free Press.

"Doing" the Art Museum.

A drawing in Life represented two young women in an art museum standing before the Laocoon group while one remarks: "I can see that they are firemen, all right, but I don't see why they got so tangled up in the hose."

Concerning the Remaking of Suits



It is a good idea to buy an extra yard or so of the material selected for a tailored suit, in order that the coat or skirt, or both, may be altered and the suit remodeled. Good fabrics outlast styles, and a suit is often regretfully consigned to the discard, not because it is worn but because styles have changed since it was made.

A suit that is required to do more than one season's service without any alteration should be conservative in style. A plain skirt of medium fullness, and a box coat or one of the plain, semifitted models, if well made of good material and fine finish, is never out of the running.

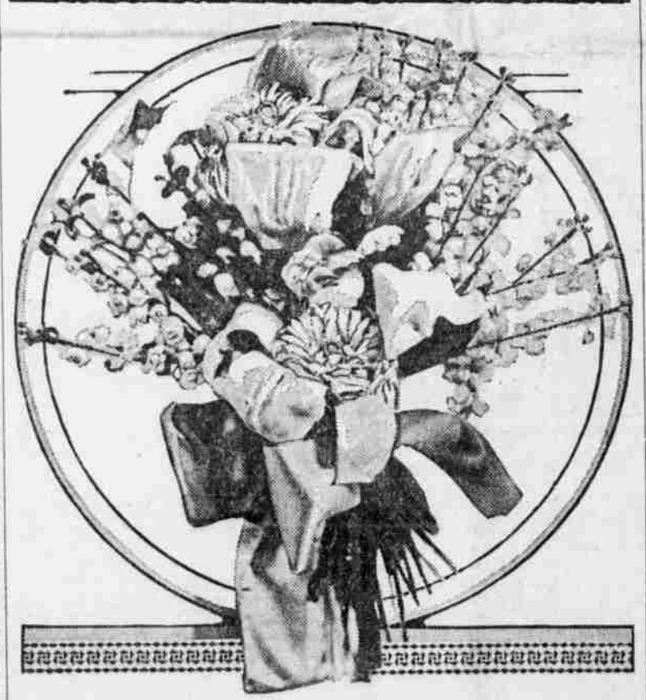
A good model to follow in remaking a suit is shown in the picture given here. The skirt is made with an inverted panel set in at the back and front, and a narrow skirt may be widened by the addition of such panels. Another good plan for widening a narrow skirt is to split it up at each side to the swell of the hip. Here it is trimmed to form a yoke, and an extra piece is set in at each side by shirring or plaiting it to the yoke. The fashion for short skirts help make the way easy in altering them, and borders at the bottom and bands set on are useful for the same purpose.

Coats have been brought up to date this season by the addition of full skirts, set on at the waist line, and by belts and pockets made in the new mode. A collar and cuffs in another fabric help out in the transformation, and buttons supplement these with the smartest of finishing touches.

It is a great satisfaction to convert an old style into a new one. Whether one is compelled to be economical or not a remade suit made of good cloth adds variety to the wardrobe and admits of the exercise of the individual taste in design.

Artificial feathers for millinery, made of fur, have been invented by a Boston man.

Little Ministers of Vanity



Someone whose occupation, or business, is the thinking up of pretty things must have turned her attention recently to artificial flowers. For these cunning copies of nature's beauty-wonders are compelling attention everywhere because they are used in new and unusual ways. We are used to seeing them in corsage bouquets and replacing natural flowers in the limousine. We are familiar with them in girdles about the waist and in wreaths about the hair, but these are only mere beginnings of their usefulness as it has been lately developed.

Everywhere little blossoms nestle in bows and rosettes of malines or lace, ornamenting collars and cuffs. They dangle, in place of ribbons, in hanging sprays from the girdle. They are perched in bright sprays on the party or the shopping bag, and they adorn the pincushion, the perfume bottle and the powder puff.

A small bouquet set in a frill of gauze and suspended by narrow ribbons that are tied about the wrist is the latest adjunct but one of the party gown. And that one is the spray of flowers which finishes an adorable anklet of malines that is tied above the slipper to fly with the feet of the youthful dancer. Only one ankle is allowed this final touch of color and coquetry.

The corsage bouquet and the flowers for the limousine have other business in hand besides their important mission of beauty. They are determined to be useful as well as ornamental. A bouquet for the limousine is shown in the picture, made of two orchids and many sprays of lifelike lilies of the valley. In the heart of one orchid concealed by flower petals, is a tiny box of compact powder and the other dares to harbor in this secret way a box of rouge. Flower petals cover the small powder puff that slips in each box and the unnoticeable little ring that is the handle of the puff is covered with silk floss.

The stems of the flowers are tied with a bow of ribbon matching one of the shades in the orchids in color. One ribbon loop is sewed up along the edges to form a case for a tiny mirror. Look twice in the heart of the newest corsage rose and the chances are that you will find it harboring the same sort of first aids to Cupid.

Julia Bottomley

Quaint Runner Design.

There is a strong evidence of the revival of things quaint in needlework, not only in stitches, but in designs as well. One expression of this revival is noticeable in a runner for a library table. Conventionalized birds form the principal motif, and are stamped upon heavy tan crash. They are embroidered in vivid colorings, heavy wool being used for the purpose. The rounded ends of the runner add an unusual effect to the scarf. These are finished with fringe, which looks just as old-fashioned as the birds themselves. The sides of the scarf are embellished with a conventional border formed of solid and outline stitches.

A pillow displaying the same design would complete a very attractive set for somebody's library.

Many Like Him.

"Ever notice how Jones butts into a conversation?" "Yes; he always thinks his particular train of thought has the right of way."—Boston Transcript.

SPONGE BREAD OF QUALITY

Proper Mixture of Ingredients Is of the First Importance in Its Preparation.

One cake yeast, one and one-half quarts lukewarm water, two tablespoonfuls sugar, four and a half quarts sifted flour, two tablespoonfuls lard or butter, melted, one tablespoonful salt.

Dissolve the yeast and sugar in one quart of the lukewarm water, and add one and one-half quarts of sifted flour, or sufficient to make an ordinary sponge. Beat well. Cover and set aside to rise for about one and one-half hours in a warm place.

When well-risen add the pint of lukewarm water, lard or butter, the remainder of the flour, or enough to make a moderately firm dough, and the salt. Knead thoroughly; place in greased bowl. Cover and let rise from one and one-half to two hours.

When light, mold into loaves and place in well-greased baking pans, cover and let rise again for about one hour. When light, bake forty to fifty minutes, reducing the heat of oven after first ten minutes.

This recipe makes four large loaves.

The whole process takes from five and one-half to six hours, and if followed closely will produce excellent results.

If a richer loaf is desired, use milk in place of all or part of the water

OATMEAL BREAD AT ITS BEST

Recipe That May Be Relied On to Give Satisfaction to the Most Discriminating Palate.

One cake yeast, one-half cupful lukewarm water, two cupfuls boiling water, two cupfuls rolled oats, one-quarter cupful brown sugar, two tablespoonfuls lard or butter, melted, four cupfuls sifted flour, one teaspoonful salt.

Pour two cupfuls of boiling water over oatmeal, cover and let stand until lukewarm. Dissolve yeast and sugar in one-half cupful lukewarm water, add shortening and add this to the oatmeal and water. Add one cupful of flour, or enough to make an ordinary sponge. Beat well. Cover and set aside in a moderately warm place to rise for one hour, or until light.

Add enough flour to make a dough—about three cupfuls, and the salt. Knead well. Place in greased bowl, cover and let rise in a moderately warm place, until double in bulk—about one and one-half hours.

Mold into loaves, fill well-greased pans half full, cover and let rise again about one hour. Bake 45 minutes in a hot oven.

One-half cupful of chopped nuts may be added, if desired.

Cheese for Dessert.

It is said that a little cheese at the end of a dinner acts as a digestive agent, but whether or not this is true, no well appointed dinner is without it. In many homes a bit of cheese with an accompanying fruit or jelly, is used as a dessert instead of some pudding or pie. It is just a sufficient finish to a family dinner without dessert. If there is dessert, the cheese is frequently served with the salad, roquefort cheese with lettuce or tomatoes. Connoisseurs do not cut a roquefort cheese until it is well advanced in decay and therefore it is not well to set before a man of this sort a new bit of the cheese. It is more advisable to leave it out altogether and give him brie or cheddar, both of which are favorite cheeses with men.

One-Dish Meal.

One round steak, one large carrot, one small onion, one head of celery, two large potatoes.

Wash, peel and cut up vegetables. Cut meat into two-inch pieces and fry in a little fat quickly just enough to brown sides.

Put vegetables and meat in pot; cover, season and let simmer until meat is tender. Thicken with flour and empty into pudding dish. Put egg cup in center and cover with pie crust, bake. When brown, set where it will keep warm, or if made in morning set away and warm on back of stove before using.

Banana Trifle.

Cover the bottom of a serving dish with little sponge cakes or ladyfingers, then arrange a layer of thinly-sliced bananas over these; squeeze the juice of two oranges and one lemon over them, and cover with a smooth boiled custard. If the custard is colored with the juice from canned raspberries or with a little coloring from a package of gelatin it will make a very attractive appearance. Top with whipped cream and decorate with candied rose leaves or in any manner you prefer.

Cream Mince.

Chop not too fine, four large cold potatoes, about three-quarters that quantity of cold beets, and a third onion. Mix all together and dust with flour, salt and pepper. Pick up one cupful of salt fish. Put water over the fish to soften. Make a cream with two tablespoonfuls of butter and one of flour and half cupful hot water and same of milk. Cook until done. Drain water off the fish and add to the cream with the vegetables. Heat and serve.

Bread Griddlecakes.

One and a half cupfuls of fine stale bread crumbs, one and one-half cupfuls scalded milk, two tablespoonfuls butter, two eggs, one-half cupful flour, one-half teaspoonful salt, four teaspoonfuls baking powder. Add milk and butter to crumbs and soak until crumbs are soft; add baking powder mixed and sifted. Cook same as other griddlecakes.

Cabbage Omelet.

Boil a small cabbage until tender, drain, let stand several hours, then chop finely. Season with pepper and salt, add one tablespoonful of melted butter, three well-beaten eggs and half a cupful of thin cream. Mix one large tablespoonful of butter in an omelet pan, turn in the mixture, stir until brown, turn out in a hot dish, and garnish with parsley.

Rural Serbia

THE kingdom of Serbia is one of the smallest in Europe, and has been very slow in development. Greater progress, however, has been made during the last ten years than for centuries before. The area of the country is 33,891 square miles, the population being over four and a half millions, mostly professing the Greek orthodox faith. The inhabitants are largely devoted to agricultural pursuits and, as a consequence, there are very numerous small farms in existence which belong to the farmers, and by the law of primogeniture descend from father to son. Although there are two large towns, Belgrade and Nish, most of the population is rural, and 85 per cent, at least, are engaged in agriculture; but it is of a primitive kind, as may be witnessed any day on the small farms referred to where the wooden plow used in the days of Xenophon may be seen in daily use.

This primitive state of agriculture is largely due to the absence of any organization or systematic agricultural education. Modern methods have only been introduced in a tentative way during the last ten years, but there are no agricultural colleges yet in existence, although there are a number of model farms which are subsidized by the state, and in which technical instruction in dairying, fruit farming, silk cultivation, wine growing and similar subjects is given. Tobacco is produced to some extent, but is not very much exported, and indeed the total exports from the country are comparatively small, the largest amount being sent to Austria-Hungary.

The principal crop raised is maize, and very large quantities of this cereal are consumed in the country in the manufacture of maize bread and many other preparations in which ground maize forms the basis.

The flesh consumed is principally pork, although mutton, goat and beef enter to some extent into the daily dietary, more especially in the towns. Pork, however, in the fresh and in the cured state, is used everywhere, and every farmer, small or large, is a grower of pigs, the type preferred being the Mangalicza breed, which has the characteristic of producing deep layers of fat along the back, which is cut into long strips, slightly salted and used in the place of butter. So important is the pork-curing industry considered in Serbia that the government subsidizes the curing establishments and in several ways gives concessions to the curers of pig meat. The salt required in the business is subject to a rebate of 50 per cent of its value, as it is used for industrial purposes, there being a state monopoly of salt in the country.

Sheep Rank Next to Pigs.

Some of the customs in connection with agriculture are very interesting, among them being the universal co-operation of the farmers in annually sending their sheep to the hills. The sheep industry ranks next to that of pigs, and wool is produced in considerable quantity. Serbian mutton is noted also in eastern countries, and before the war was much in demand in Constantinople.

But the principal use of the sheep is to produce milk, from which a great variety of cheeses is made. The farmers who are the owners of the sheep unite together to employ one or more shepherds, who take charge of their flocks and milk them while they are on the hills. The shepherds are also responsible for making the cheese out of the milk, and pay themselves for their trouble by taking a certain percentage of the produce, the remainder being divided among the farmers, according to the number of sheep they possess.

The cheese produced is somewhat bitter in taste and not unlike ewe milk cheese, which at one time was produced so largely in the south of Scotland.

The national customs of rural Serbia are very quaint. The marriage ceremonies, for example, are of the most elaborate character; the bride is selected by the parents of the bridegroom, and this is looked upon as being quite in the natural order of human affairs; but all the ceremonies in connection with marriage are of the most elaborate and, for that matter, costly character.

Christmas ceremonies also are very elaborate and are reminiscent of Pagan rites. One of the customs is to cut down a tree in the forest, and in falling it must lie to the east. In every household such a tree is cut into three portions, and is looked upon as being sacred and not to be touched. There is much throwing of wheat, which has a certain symbolic significance, and the log is then placed on the fire, while, at the same time, the inevitable pig is roasted for a feast. The ceremonies continue during Christmas day, which is given up to feasting, mingled with religious exhortations, and only come to an end when the night is far advanced.

People Are Superstitious.

As a nation the Serbians are extremely superstitious, and this feature runs through the whole of their national customs, whether it is in the laying out of a house or in the preparation for death; but the Serbian farmer does not fear death, as he usually prepares the boards for his own coffin and keeps them in readiness in his house.

ON THE ROAD FROM USKUB TO KUSTENDIL.

In the country villages it is the custom to give a kind of feast five times in the year for the souls of departed heads of households, and food and drink, including wine, are placed on the graves and afterwards given to the poor. It is a high holiday for the beggars, and they are not slow to take advantage of the occasion.

In the country districts there is very little use for money, as the farms, being small, are utilized for the production of food for the winter, and this consisting as it does, largely of wine, brandy produced from plums, sauerkraut, potatoes, onions and the pods of capsicum, known in Serbia as "paprika," there is little need to sell the produce in order to buy other commodities. All these and others are stored in the cellars, but in the kitchens of the one-storied houses, which are the general rule, bacon, hams and salted meat are hung up to dry and to mature.

Although the houses in the country are not very large, there is still provision made for the guest, who may be a perfect stranger but who is welcome to the hospitality which is a tradition with Serbians in the same way as it used to exist in the Scottish Highlands. The industries of Serbia are small, as compared with agriculture, and this unfortunately is the result of a settled policy, which until recent years was enforced by the governing classes. When Serbia comes to her own again after the present war, much in the national life will be changed; the old order of things will have passed away and the development of other industries besides those associated with agriculture is certain to take place.

South Africa's Demand for Films.

South Africa imports 60,000 feet of moving picture films weekly.

Toronto Street Railwaymen union has 141 members fighting at the front.

Drill Amenities.

Mayor John Purroy Mitchel said at a dinner in New York:

"The memories of camp life are a very pleasant thing to any soldier. Even the little vivacities of camp life seem in the retrospect pleasant enough.

"Thus I often laugh about a banker who was being drilled daily one day at Plattsburg by a broker-sergeant.

"'What'll you give me,' said the broker-sergeant, an old Yale end, 'if I take that hump off your back?'

"'I'll give you,' the banker answered with a tart laugh, 'something to make your hair grow, sarge.'"

Pirot Famous for Carpets.

Pirot is the center of an important Serbian industry. Pirot carpets, blue and red, are to be found in every Serbian home, and have gained fame beyond the Balkans. They nearly all are made in private houses, entirely by hand, often without even a shuttle, the workers using no patterns, but artistic instinct producing harmonious results. The art has been acquired, no doubt, from the Turks, who learned it from the Persians, but Pirot carpets have qualities all their own. Colors and materials are so strong that it is almost impossible to wear them out.

Sick? Nonsense!

The ocean liner was rolling like a chip, but as usual in such instances one passenger was aggressively, disgustingly healthy. "Sick, eh?" he remarked to a pale-green person who was leaning on the rail. The pale-green person regarded the healthy one with all the scorn he could muster. "Sick nothing!" he snorted weakly. "I'm just hanging over the front of the boat to see how the captain cranks it!"

Ready for the Day.

Little Elsie entered the parlor one morning and her quick eye discovered that the slip coverings had been removed from the furniture. "Look, mamma!" she exclaimed. "Someone has taken the nighties off the chairs."

Neglect Their Opportunity.

The reason some speakers are not humorous more frequently is that they neglect to try to be serious.